It Only Happens When I Dance With You

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Since Apple Bloom enrolled in dance class, she and Tender Taps have been spending a lot of time together. But when Scootaloo joins the class and proves to be a better dancer, and also becomes Tender Taps' new partner, dance class suddenly isn't so fun for Apple Bloom. Inspired by the Irving Berlin song of the same title. Cover image by Rock29Roll.

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Introduction
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The premise was originally for a chapter for "CMC: The Next Generation," but after the episode "On Your Marks" actually showed a dance class, I decided to change the story a bit with the canon characters.

Inspired by the song "It Only Happens When I Dance With You" by Irving Berlin. The Judy Garland rendition is especially worth listening to.

Tender Taps and Apple Bloom were walking back from dance class and talking about today's lesson.

"Come on," the colt huffed, "you weren't *that* bad."

She looked at him with a raised eyebrow. "I tumbled over the entire class."

He shrugged. "No pony was hurt. Dancers step on their tails all the time."

Rolling her eyes, she said, "Name *one* thing I did right today."

"Well, you finally mastered the shuffle. You just gotta work on your ball changes."

"Those things are crazy!" She looked at the bottom of her hoof. "How can ya even step on *one* part of yerr hoof?!"

"Here, I'll show you."

He stopped for a moment and slowly stepped his right hooves back, landing on their soles. Immediately afterwards, he stepped his left hooves forward in the same manner. Apple Bloom attempted to imitate him, but ended up crossing her back legs.

"Ugh!" she groaned. "I have a feelin' this sort of dancin' wasn't made

for four legs!"

Tender Taps laughed. "Okay, okay. Imagine it's late at night and you're creeping downstairs for a late night snack."

Apple Bloom smiled at the thought. "Fritters."

"That's right. Think of the fritters. Only instead of creeping forwards, you'd be creeping backwards, and you'd actually *want* to be heard. But don't actually go backwards."

"Then why'd ya say…?"

"Just walk backwards in place. Okay? Now try the move again with that in mind."

He showed her again and held out his hoof. Taking a deep breath, Apple Bloom closed her eyes and imagined creeping on her soles as she stepped backwards with the fronts of her right hooves touching the ground and then doing the same with her left.

"Now faster. Do it in a leap."

She tried it and looked down at her hooves.

"Hey! I did it!"

"See? You just need a little more practice."

Apple Bloom grinned as they continued on their way. "I don't know if I'd survive in this dance class without ya, Taps. Ya've done so much to help me."

He blushed. "Well, you helped me earn my cutie mark. I'm just returning the favor."

They arrived at Sweet Apple Acres.

"Whelp, here's my stop. Thanks for walkin' me."

"See you next week!" he said with a wave.

She waved back as she went into the house. Applejack was baking

pies in the kitchen.

"How was dance class?"

Apple Bloom giggled. "Terrible!"

Confused at her contradicting tone, Applejack turned to her little sister. A wide smile was spread across her face and her eyes were staring vacantly at the ceiling. Glancing out the window, Applejack saw a small orange earth colt with purple hair going down the path. She grinned knowingly.

"Is that the Tender Taps fella ya've told me so much about?"

"Mmm-hmm," Apple Bloom nodded. "He just helped me with a ball change." She quickly tried to demonstrate but stumbled on her front hooves. "Well, I did it earlier anyway. Guess Taps is right about me needin' more practice."

"He sounds nice," Applejack said with a smirk. "Ya've been spendin' a lot of time with him lately."

"He's been helpin' me."

"And he's pretty cute too."

"Yeah, I guess he…" Apple Bloom stiffened. " *What* ?!"

Applejack laughed. "See? Just talkin' about 'im makes ya blush!"

"No it doesn't!"

"Uh-huh." The sudden flush in the filly's cheeks did not escape her. "Face it, sis. Ya *like* 'im."

"Yuck! Do not! Taps is just a friend from dance class and I like 'im! I don't," she gagged, " *like 'im* , like 'im!"

"If ya say so, sis."

But Applejack was still smirking when she returned to the pies.

"My lil' sister is growin' up," she murmured happily.

"Shut up!" Apple Bloom hollered as she stomped upstairs.

"And vone, two, three, four! Two, two, three, four!"

Apple Bloom struggled to keep up with Ms. Steps' counts as she held onto Tender Taps. It was hard to see her back hooves because her cheek was pressed so close to his. Even though Ms. Steps had said partnering was a little advanced for Apple Bloom, the teacher had agreed to let her try it when she saw how well the filly worked with Tender Taps. Every time Apple Bloom stumbled, he would quickly bring her back in step.

"Vone, two, three, four!"

Apple Bloom giggled as she whispered in her partner's ear. "What a ' *vone* ' anyway?"

"I wouldn't judge," he murmured. "You're the one who says 'y'all' all the time."

Her smile vanished. "Fair enough."

"Vone, two, three, four! Spin, two, three, four!"

"Like we practiced," Taps whispered as he lifted his right hoof.

Apple Bloom stepped away from him and let him spin her.

"Dip, two, three, four!"

But Apple Bloom was so dizzy that she fell the wrong way. Thinking that she was going to hit the floor, she cried out. But Tender Taps caught her in his hoof and winked.

"I gotcha."

She smiled as he snapped her back up.

"Good catch, Tender Taps!" Hoofer Steps called. "Again! Vone, two, three, four!"

The class was interrupted as the door opened.

"Vait!" Hoofer Steps called as she turned around. "Ah, you must be new pupil!"

As Apple Bloom and Tender Taps stopped, they looked to the filly in the doorway dressed in the uniform leotard, tights and laced slippers. Apple Bloom gasped.

"Scootaloo?"

"Hey, Apple Bloom!" Scootaloo exclaimed as she entered the room.

"Whatchya doin' here?"

"Well when I saw how you were getting on with your dancing, I thought I'd give it a try."

The earth filly grinned brightly. "This'll be great! Somethin' we can do together!"

"Vhy don't you show us what you can do?" Hoofer Steps asked, signaling for the students to clear the floor. "Just so ve can see your level."

Scootaloo shrugged and stepped into the middle of the dancefloor. Hoofer Steps repositioned the needle on the record player so it would start from the beginning. As the music filled the room, Scootaloo kicked up onto her front hoof and spun around, keeping her head forward until the last second. When she came to a stop, she was balancing perfectly on her hoof.

"Good," the teacher complimented, "but ve do more than just spin. Ve do ballet, tap and traditional ballroom dance."

"Okay," Scootaloo said, landing back on her hooves. "Don't know much about that stuff, but I can do this."

She stood on her back hooves and began twirling and kicking. Jumping into the air, she clicked her back hooves together, landed on her front hooves and did a backflip, landing with a perfect split. The class gawked in awe.

"I didn't know you could do that!" Apple Bloom exclaimed.

"I just did some of my scooter tricks," Scootaloo said as she rose, "without the scooter."

"Vell done," Hoofer Steps said, clapping her hooves. "You have excellent raw talent. Ve are vorking in pairs now. Hmm." She looked around. "But ve have odd number. Apple Broom!"

Apple Bloom blushed at the teacher's mispronunciation.

"Since Scootaroo is your friend, perhaps you could alternate vith Tender Taps. He can help her catch up."

"Oh," the filly said, glancing at her partner. "Uh, sure. No problem."

"In meantime, you vork on *pliés* at bar."

Apple Bloom obeyed the instructor and went over to the bar. She steadied herself as she stood on her hind legs and slowly bent them along with Hoofer Steps' four counts and raised them on the next four.

"Vone, two, three, four! Two, two, three four! Spin, two, three four! Dip, two three four! Good, Scootaroo!"

Apple Bloom watched Scootaloo and Tender Taps as they danced. Their moves were seamless and not once did they stumble. Every now and then Taps would mutter a compliment at how a natural Scootaloo was. As he guided her with his hooves, Apple Bloom felt a tug inside her chest.

They danced so well together, and from their smiles, they were obviously enjoying it. At first Apple Bloom had been overjoyed that she was going to share a dance class with one of her best friends, but now that she was dancing with her usual partner, it felt like her space had been invaded.

Apple Bloom shook her head. She was overreacting. It was good that Scootaloo was doing well in the class. And it wasn't like Apple Bloom wouldn't get to dance with Tender Taps again. They were just alternating. She would get her turn next class.

Weeks went by and Hoofer Steps was quite impressed with Scootaloo's performance. Even the students would whisper about how a natural she was, considering she had never taken dance lessons before. And Scootaloo *was* a natural, Apple Bloom had to admit. After all, Scootaloo had been the one who had given her dancing tips for the talent show long ago.

It wasn't the fact that her friend was better than her. Everyone in the class was better than her. It was the fact that since Scootaloo joined, Apple Bloom had spent less and less time with Tender Taps.

Every class there would be fifteen minutes set aside for freestyle practice and during that time Tender Taps would usually help Apple Bloom with her moves. But since Scootaloo was new, he had started using that time to show her a few ballet and tap moves, leaving Apple Bloom to figure things out for herself. During tap time, when the class was all in a line, Tender Taps would stand next to Apple Bloom so he could whisper advice. Now, he stood between her and Scootaloo and Apple Bloom didn't like the divided attention. One day when they were warming up at the bar, Tender Taps stood behind Scootaloo instead of his usual place behind Apple Bloom, and she glared at his back for every *plié* and *relevé* .

Partnering was the worst. Even though Apple Bloom and Scootaloo were supposed to alternate with Tender Taps, Apple Bloom's time became shorter and shorter because Ms. Steps would get so enthralled in Scootaloo's dancing.

"Vonderful!" the teacher applauded when the lesson was over. "You two have magnificent teamwork!"

The two of them took a bow while Apple Bloom narrowed her eyes at them.

"Now," Hoofer Steps addressed the class, "you all know ve have recital coming up. Ve vill have auditions next week for partnered and solo routines. You vill still be in recital if you are not picked, but you vill be dancing in group. That is all."

She dismissed the class by clapping her hooves. Apple Bloom grunted as she began unlacing her slippers.

"Tender Taps, Scootaroo…"

Looking up, she saw the teacher approaching her two friends.

"I think you two should consider doing partnered routine for the recital."

Apple Bloom stiffened.

"Gee, I don't know, Ms. Steps," Tender Taps said, rubbing the back of his neck. "I usually go solo."

"But you two vork vell together!" the teacher exclaimed. "Like Asteed and Ginger!"

"We *are* pretty good," Scootaloo said with a shrug. "What do you think, Taps?"

Apple Bloom's face flushed with fury. Only *she* called him Taps!

"Well…" he started to say.

Please say no, please say no, please say no…

"I'll think about it."

She snorted. *He'll* think *about it?!*

"Yeah, we'll think about it," Scootaloo agreed.

"Okay," Ms. Steps said with a smile. "See you next week."

As the three foals were walking out of the building, Apple Bloom's head was down as she stomped alongside her friends who were talking animatedly.

"Do you really think we could pull off a routine together?" Scootaloo asked.

"I suppose," said Tender Taps. "You want to try something with

tap?"

"I think Ms. Steps likes our ballroom stuff better."

"We could try a tango."

"What's that?"

"I could come by your house and show you."

That did it. Apple Bloom could no longer keep it in as she stopped in her tracks and snapped towards her friends.

"Sure, go to her house why dontcha?!" she bellowed. "Make a routine why dontcha?! After all, you two are great together! Ya even *look* great together! Why dontcha just get married while you're at it?!"

She ran ahead, the wind stinging her eyes and forcing the tears out. She ignored her friends' cries, for she was too upset to talk right now. She just kept on running all the way to Sweet Apple Acres. Applejack stopped herself from bucking a tree when she saw the state her little sister was in.

"What's wrong, sis?"

Finally coming to a stop, Apple Bloom collapsed to the ground and burst into tears.

"Apple Bloom?" Applejack knelt down, put her hooves around her and gently rocked her. "There, there. Let it all out."

"It's not fair!"

"Huh?"

The filly pulled away so she could look up at her sister with red eyes. "She's taken Taps from me!"

"Calm down, sis. Take deep breaths and start from the beginnin'."

She did so and spoke rapidly, "Since Scootaloo joined our dance

class she's been hoggin' Tender Taps and dancin' with 'im and partnerin' with 'im and he's been helpin' her and now they're doin' a routine together even though he's supposed to be my partner and it's just not fair!"

"Ah," Applejack said with a nod. "I see. You're jealous of yerr friend."

Apple Bloom scowled. "I'm not jealous!"

Her sister raised an eyebrow.

"Okay maybe a little! But he's supposed to be helpin' *me* become a better dancer! Scootaloo's the best in the class next to him! She doesn't need 'im!"

"Apple Bloom, Scootaloo's yerr friend. She wouldn't hurt ya on purpose. And ya don't really own Tender Taps, so she's not really stealin' 'im from ya. And just because he seems to be focusin' on her doesn't mean he likes ya even less. It's okay to be a little jealous. It just goes to show how much ya care about the pony and you're afraid of losin' 'im. But don't get angry at Scootaloo for it."

Apple Bloom sighed. "I guess it's not really her fault. Ms. Steps was the one who asked Taps to help her." She shook her head. "But still, when I see 'em dancin' together I can't help but feel…"

"Apple Bloom!"

The sisters turned around as Tender Taps came running up the path.

"Apple Bloom!" he panted. "I'm so glad I caught up with you! I really need to talk to you!"

Applejack looked between them. "Well," she said, getting up, "I better get back to my apple buckin'."

She disappeared over the hill, leaving the two foals alone. Apple Bloom stood up, but she kept her back to Tender Taps.

"Look," he said carefully, "Scootaloo and I didn't mean to make you mad…"

She spun around and shouted, "I'M NOT MAD!"

He jumped backward.

"Okay I'm mad! It's hard not to be when my partner is dancin' with some pony else and helpin' her when I'm the one who needs help and you've been spendin' all yerr time with her instead of me!"

Tender Taps blinked. "Apple Bloom, I was only helping Scootaloo these past few weeks because she's new."

"But ya said so yerrself she's a natural!"

"Yes, but she's not familiar with the basic dance steps. I was just helping her catch up like Ms. Steps asked me to."

Apple Bloom stared at him a while and then looked down at the ground. "Oh." She circled her hoof in the ground. "Sorry, I just…I was feelin' kinda left out."

"I didn't mean to make you feel that way."

"I know. And…I understand if ya want Scootaloo as a partner. The two of ya work great together."

He cocked his head. "Who said I wanted Scootaloo as a partner?"

She looked up in confusion. "But…yerr routine…"

"Scootaloo and I talked about that after you left," he said, stepping forward. "We've decided not to do it."

Her eyes widened. "Why?"

"Scootaloo liked the idea of doing a solo better."

"But…what about you?"

He smiled as he lifted her chin. "I thought we could do a routine together."

"Us? But…why would ya wanna do a routine with me instead of Scootaloo? She's a better dancer."

"Scootaloo may be a better dancer," he said as he moved closer, "but you're a better *partner* ."

She scrunched her nose. "Whaddya talkin' about? I'm always fumblin' and steppin' on yerr hooves!"

"But that never stops us from dancing. Scootaloo is great and all but," he blushed as he circled his hoof, "when I dance with her…it doesn't happen."

She cocked her head. " *What* doesn't happen?"

He looked at her sheepishly. "The thing that happens when I dance with you."

She raised an eyebrow. "You're not makin' a lick of sense."

"It's hard to explain." He grinned brightly. "Here, I'll show you."

Taking her hoof, he brought her in. Apple Bloom watched in confusion as he set his other hoof on her waist.

"Whaddya doin'?"

He smirked. "We're dancing."

"Now? Here?"

"It's the only way I can show you what I mean."

She glanced around. "There's no music."

"We won't need it."

"What steps are we doin'?" she asked in panic. "What tempo? What counts? What if I trip over ya?!"

"Don't you remember what I said when we first met? You just have to do it with feeling. But if it'll make you feel better, I'll start the counts."

He stepped forward, making her step back as he led her into a simple box step.

"Vone, two, three, four," he said, mimicking Ms. Steps' accent. "Two, two, three, four."

She giggled as his counts grew softer until she had to rely on the rhythm set in her head. Worried that she might stumble, she looked down at her hooves.

"Don't think about the steps," he said as he lifted her chin. "Keep your eyes on me."

Her amber eyes locked onto his purple ones and suddenly Apple Bloom forgot all about her hooves and let him guide her. His grip on her was firm but gentle, and every move was slow and considerate. When he lifted his right hoof, she went under it with ease, her gaze only leaving him for a second as her head snapped around with her body.

Everything faded away as the waltz Ms. Steps would play in class ran through Apple Bloom's head. She wasn't aware of how they were moving, just that he was holding her and that they weren't fumbling. It was like their hooves weren't even touching the ground as he carefully spun her and brought her back into an embrace. He was smiling and his pupils dilated as they focused on her. Apple Bloom's eyes changed to match his.

She cried out as he suddenly placed both hooves on her waist and hoisted her up. She gripped his shoulders in fear as they turned. But when she realized how strong his hooves were, she slowly let go and leaned back, spreading her front legs out with a laugh.

Then he prudently lowered her and lifted his hoof to twirl her. When he brought her back in this time, he dropped her into a dip. The sudden movement made her face flush and it became even redder as her eyes met his again. He smiled warmly down at her.

"Do you see what I mean?"

Apple Bloom didn't say anything, only gulped and nodded dumbly.

Applejack had watched the entire scene from behind a tree. A wide grin spread across her face as Tender Taps brought Apple Bloom

back up and the two of them held hooves as they went into the house for a snack. The mare sighed as she leaned back against the trunk.

"Yup," she said, wiping away a tear. "Growin' more and more each day."

I didn't ship Apple Bloom with any pony until that episode. I couldn't help it! It's adorable!

Man, it's hard describing dance steps for someone with four legs!